

IRDC OPERATING PROCEDURES AND PHILOSOPHIES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Indiana Rural Development Council (IRDC) is a partnership of local, state, federal, profit and not-for-profit stakeholders that support Indiana communities. The IRDC's purpose is to coordinate efforts of citizens and governments to meet the economic and social needs of rural Indiana.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

BROAD REPRESENTATION AND NON PARTISANSHIP

The IRDC will be established and operated in a nonpartisan nondiscriminatory manner. The Council will endeavor to make its membership broad and representative of the geographic interests and diversity of the state. Projects and activities will be planned and implemented in the same manner.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

All five partners (federal, state, local, not-for-profit and for-profit) are valued stakeholders and should be fully engaged in Council decisions with no partner dominating any of the other partners.

ROLES OF THE PARTNERS

All of the participating organizations will be full partners in the IRDC and will be expected to cooperate in a timely manner with all other partners in developing innovative problem solving approaches. Further, all partners will be expected to recommend and encourage the implementation of proposed solutions. Each partner brings unique roles to the Council. They:

- Advocate and develop solutions and programs to meet identified regional and statewide rural development needs;
- Expedite solutions to help meet state and local needs;
- Serve as a sounding board for rural citizens, organizations and businesses;
- Share problems and propose innovative solutions;
- Implement solutions;
- Provide technical and administrative support;
- Cooperate closely with all other partners; and
- Share frustrations and successes.

STATE AND LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

Activities under the IRDC should empower and build the capacity of state agencies and rural communities within Indiana to design unique responses to Indiana's special rural development needs. The Council will encourage rural communities to make local and multi-jurisdictional determinations of progress and selection of activities to be implemented.

FLEXIBILITY AND INNOVATION

Members of the IRDC should be flexible and innovative in establishing new partnerships and trying fresh, new approaches to rural development issues. Responses to rural development should utilize unique approaches to fit different situations.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

All members bring to the Council information, experience and contributions to rural community development. Members of the Council should use the IRDC as a means to educate themselves and share knowledge of activities vital to rural community development. Furthermore, each Council member should strive to share the knowledge they gain with non-participants in the IRDC, so that information is disseminated as widely as possible.

COUNCIL OPERATIONS — THE COUNCIL

Membership in the Indiana Rural Development Council shall be open to all interested federal, state, regional, local government, not-for-profit and for-profit agencies, institutions, or organizations interested or engaged in rural development. Members shall register their name, address and organization with the IRDC and shall choose a partner caucus which best matches their interest. Members may be required to pay a modest fee to cover postage and handling for meeting notices and other mailings related to Council business.

The Council will be organized into five caucuses representing the five partners. Annually, each caucus will elect, by consensus, one representative and one alternate to the Governing Board.

The Council will be chaired by the Chair of the Governing Board.

The Council will meet at least once a year. At the meeting, the Council will elect representatives to the Governing Board based on the recommendations of the partner caucuses. The full body shall participate in the election.

Additional meetings of the Council may be held with a minimum of 10 days written notice to each member of the Council.

The consensus of those in attendance at any Council meeting shall be required for decisions on all issues including modification of these Operating Philosophies and Principles.

A Council member may send a substitute to a Council meeting.

Decisions by written, mail-in proxy shall not be permitted.

GOVERNING BOARD

The Governing Board shall be responsible for the ongoing operations of the Council, establishing the agenda for Council meetings, and overview of the Executive Director.

The Governing Board also shall serve as a screening committee for issues coming before the Council. Issues may be studied by the board, referred to study groups and/or referred to the entire Council. The Governing Board may implement some solutions or refer proposals to the Council for further action. Actions taken by the Governing Board may be reported at the next Council meeting for ratification by the Council.

The Governing Board shall be made up of no less than 20 members and liaisons and five sector alternates as described below:

Elected Members

- Three members from the Federal sector
- Three members from the State sector
- Three members from the Local Government sector
- Three members from the Not-For-Profit sector
- Three members from the For-Profit sector

Appointed Members and Liaisons

- Three members representing rural youth
- One member from the Democratic caucus of the House of Representatives
- One member from the Republican caucus of the House of Representatives
- One member from the Democratic caucus of the Senate
- One member from the Republican caucus of the Senate
- One member appointed jointly by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor from their offices
- Past board chairpersons will be invited to remain on the board

Three members representing rural youth will be invited to serve on the IRDC Governing Board each year. These representatives, preferably high school students who have shown leadership and civic service potential, will each serve one-year terms as full voting members of the Governing Board.

The representatives from the legislature shall be appointed by the party leadership in each Chamber. The legislator shall have a direct tie to a rural community or represent a rural district. The party leadership also shall appoint an alternate who will replace the member should the member be unable to serve.

Except for the appointments listed above, the members of the Governing Board shall be elected from the partners caucused by the Council. Terms of service on the Governing Board shall be for three years.

The Governing Board should meet six times per year or as necessary to conduct the business of the Council. Governing Board members and liaisons shall be given at least 10 days notice prior to each meeting.

Board members and liaisons shall attend at least 66 percent of the scheduled meetings. If board members are absent from more than 34 percent of the scheduled meetings or are absent from two or more consecutive meetings with unexcused absences, the Board may request that the alternate from the respective caucus fill the position of and replace the absent board member at future Board meetings. In the case of appointed members, the Board may request the appointing body to appoint a replacement.

Vacancies on the Governing Board can be filled by alternates from each of the partner caucuses at the request of the Board with the vacancy being filled with a representative coming from the same caucus. In the case of a vacancy of an appointed position, the Board may request the appointing body to appoint a replacement.

The Governing Board shall be governed by a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary, and two at-large board members and liaisons which will serve as an Executive Committee. The Governing Board shall meet and elect officers prior to the start of the calendar year. The Executive Committee shall only be elected from the 15 members representing the five partners.

The Chair shall be responsible for presiding over all meetings. The Vice-Chairman shall substitute for the Chair in the absence of the Chair. The Secretary shall be responsible for minutes, membership records and other business related responsibilities of the Council.

Board members may send substitutes to Board meetings.

All decisions of the Council shall be reached by consensus. No decisions by proxy shall be permitted.

Council and Governing Board meetings shall be open to all Council members. The Indiana Open Door Law, including rules for executive sessions, shall govern access to Council, Board and Committee meetings.

The Governing Board shall determine:

- Length of an officer's term
- Rotation of its officers
- Responsibilities of the executive committee

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES

The Council and/or Governing Board may establish study committees, task forces, and/or standing committees to address areas of interest to the Council. These committees may make recommendations to the Governing Board and/or the Council for action.

ISSUES FOR GOVERNING BOARD CONSIDERATION

Reactive — The Governing Board may respond to a variety of issues brought before it. Generally an agency or applicant must have tried all normal channels of consideration or appeal prior to coming before the Governing Board.

Generally, the Governing Board may consider the following:

- Interagency issues and/or impasses;
- Regional or statewide issues;
- Intergovernmental;
- Customer service - sounding board, at agency request, for an agency's functions or operations;
- Systemic issues; or
- Long term ramifications or aftermath such as post disaster services to an area.

Proactive — The Governing Board also may be proactive in looking at issues that may benefit rural Indiana. Generally, these issues or actions can include the following:

- Serve as a sounding board for new policies and programs;
- Search out opportunities for coordination and efficiency;
- Search for areas of potential regulatory relief; or
- Suggest changes in programs, policy and legislation to benefit rural Indiana.

STAFF

The Council, through its Governing Board, may employ staff, including an Executive Director, to further rural development and its interests in Indiana. The Executive Director shall serve as staff to the Council and Governing Board and perform duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Chair. The Executive Director shall report to the Chair of the Governing Board in the day-to-day management of Council and Governing Board affairs.

The Executive Director shall supervise any additional staff employed or on loan to the Indiana Rural Development Council.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE OPERATING PHILOSOPHIES AND PRINCIPLES

These Operating Philosophies may be reviewed from time to time and adjusted to best reflect the work and operations of the Council. The consensus of the Council at a regular or special meeting shall be required to amend or modify these Operating Philosophies and Principles. Written notice that proposed modifications will be considered and a summary of the proposed modifications shall be given to Council members at least 20 calendar days prior to the meeting at which the modifications will be considered. The full text of any proposed modifications shall be available by request and by inspection at the offices of the IRDC.

Any Council member may propose changes to these Operating Philosophies and Procedures by submitting proposed changes in writing to the Executive Director at least 30 days prior to any upcoming Council meeting.